

**Richard Gee**

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**From:** -- Maverick Spirit -- [thespirit@spiritmailer.com]  
**Sent:** Thursday, 17 January 2008 2:21 a.m.  
**To:** Richard  
**Subject:** Richard Let's make schools safe places for learning spiritmail16jan2008



**"If you can imagine it, you can achieve it  
If you can dream it, you can become it." WILLIAM ARTHUR WARD**

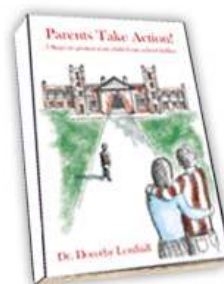
### **Making School Safe for Kids to Learn In Spiritmail January 16th, 2008**

The school holidays are nearly over and it's time for kids to go back to "get an education" and of course give the parents a rest.

As someone who actually loved every minute of my school life, and who wouldn't if they went to [Margaret River Primary and High Schools](#) where learning and living was fun, I *find it difficult to comprehend that many youngsters are truly dreading having to front up at class*. Of course being good at sport and finding learning easy certainly didn't hurt my school experience.

So why do some kids, and I understand that the number is significant, find going to school to get an education such a traumatic experience?? There are no obvious answers in my background as to why I excelled and others floundered.

It seemed inconceivable to me that the answer could lie in [the recent school massacres in the US](#), or even the frightening [kidnap and torture case of a young school boy here in Perth](#) by three of his classmates. Yet, I have just reread **Dot Lenthall's** unsettling book [Don't Just Stand There 5 Steps to protect your child from school bullying](#) and there are a number of pointers to why these things are happening.



If you have school age children you should grab a copy of [Dot's book](#) because it will surely open your mind to what is actually going on.

By co-incidence, I have been reading about similar concerns about the safety of schools in the US and one of my favourite authors [Robert Ringer](#) has a point of view on this issue that is worthy of our consideration.

Ringer writes about what he calls [The Cho Factor](#). Ringer was prompted to take action and bring to light the crisis in our Western schools systems following [Seung-Hi Cho's](#) bloody assault at **Virginia Tech** which left many people dead or injured.

Ringer ponders what part bullying played in this and the actions of other notorious school yard killers **Klebolds** and **Woodhams** or the suspect in the murder of Natalie Holloway in Aruba, **Joran Van Der Sloot** who is apparently remember by many former classmates as **a school yard bully**.

Quoting Ringer from the **January 7th, 2008** issue of his fantastic newsletter, [A Voice of Sanity in an Insane World](#):



“.. the words from Janis Ian’s 1970s song “**At Seventeen**” that have stuck with me over the years are:

*“And those whose names were never called when choosing sides for basketball.”*

The reason for this is that every day, on playgrounds all over the world, teachers still insist on having the kids in their PE classes choose up sides. Which means that one child — and only one child — is chosen last. And it’s almost always the same one.

Actually, I take that back. The last child is not chosen. He (or she) is directed to be on whichever team did not have the next-to-last pick. Teachers who have described this to me say that when the child is told which team he will be on, the members of that team usually respond with such comments as, “Oh, no, not him!” Or, “Yuk! Why do we have to get stuck with him?” Or, simply, “We don’t want him.”

Can you even begin to comprehend the damage done to the psyche of a seven- or eight-year-old child who repeatedly experiences such humiliation and verbal abuse? How can a child — who, at the same time, may be coping with learning and/or emotional issues — ever hope to recover from such ego-smashing devastation?

I suspect that more than a few **Chos, Klebolds, and Woodhams** have graduated from their ranks.

**Are the teachers who engage in such idiotic behaviour simply stupid? Or sadistic? Or perhaps *just too lazy to divide up the children as evenly as possible* — without commenting on their abilities?**

Regardless of the reason, such cruelty should be brought to an immediate halt. And it should be made clear to all teachers that if they ever make such a mistake — even once — they will be dismissed immediately."

**Challenging stuff...** I hope you take the time to make the school environment a safe place for our children and quoting Robert Ringer again:

*Show me a child who is secure, who doesn't feel threatened or intimidated, who doesn't have to think about how to negotiate his way past teacher and student bullies, who feels good about himself, who is genuinely happy, and I'll show you a child who is eager to learn. And if a child is eager to learn, he will learn.*

Enjoy this issue of **The Maverick Spirit...** That's it for today, until next time, continue to enjoy being a free spirit in a complicated world...

Wayne Mansfield

**P.S.** Did you know that [Bangladesh](#), a country of 120+ million people, is one of the official **Cricket Test Playing** nations. They are just on the receiving end of a hammering by the **Kiwis**. *But that's cricket I suppose.*

**P.P.S.** Want to make yourself understood in **Bangladesh**? Just about everybody there speaks **Bengali**. And because **Bangladesh** is virtually surrounded by **India**, the number of **Bengali** speakers in the world, **estimated at 211 million**, is much higher than most people would expect.

To say "**hello**" in Bengali, say "**Ei Je**" (EYE-jay).

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**And for something really different:**

Visit my daily thoughts and views at [Confessions of a Boy from Margaret River](#) where you can leave comments and ideas on stuff that doesn't make it to [The Maverick Spirit](#)



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### **Simple Secrets of Successful People - You Can't Force yourself to Like Broccoli**

Even as people experience different phases of their lives, including career and family changes, their underlying personality remains constant **after about age sixteen**.

**Source:** David Niven, Ph.D. [100 Simple Secrets of Successful People](#)

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### **MAVERICK QUOTE OF THE DAY**



"The superior man is modest in his speech, but exceeds in his actions."

[Confucius](#)

**Samuel Maverick** (1803-70) Texan rancher who, when branding of stock was introduced chose "**Not to Brand**." Every unbranded horse or cow he then claimed as a **Maverick!**

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**Feedback:** My inbox has been bulging with feedback - I feel honoured that so many Maverick Spiriters feel they can write and share. Thank you!!

Here are few more comments I have received since I wrote last time.

**My account of how many people speak Malay-Indonesian, brought tis contribution from a great friend Steve:**

**Wayne**

To say "hello" in Malay-Indonesian, say "Selamat pagi"

Selamat pagi is literally "good morning" - pagi is morning

You replace pagi with "pitang" (afternoon) or "malam" (evening or night)

Hello is "apa khabar?" (how are you?) and the reply is "khabar baik" (I'm fine)

**Steve Wroblewski**  
**Business Listings Limited**

**Thanks Wayne**

Your Sandpiper Story literally brought tears to my eyes.

The same Newsletter mentioned colloidal silver and I wonder if you knew that the Romans used to line their water tanks with silver to keep them germ free. Actually I had to go back to a previous Blog to find the colloidal silver referral.

**Jack Leech**

**Hello Wayne,**

I have been enjoying your newsletters for a long time now and never quite got around to replying. The Sandpiper story however is a great story and I would like to thank you for sending it.

My wife and I are Foster Carers and time after time we see that it often only takes a small thing to make a child happy; with their happiness repaid a thousandfold when they smile. Some times it only means listening to them, so that they know that they too are important.

Thank you for your thoughts and good luck for 2008.

**Allan Warren**

**Hi Wayne**

It's great to have the old Wayne back. I received **this email** which I am sure you can associate with given your challenging times.

Have a great new year and thanks for being human.

**Kevin Bolt**

**Here are a couple of examples from Kevin's email:**

**School 1960 vs. School 2007**

**Scenario:** Johnny and Mark get into a fistfight after school.

**1960** - Crowd gathers. Mark wins. Johnny and Mark shake hands and end up mates.


**2007** - Police are called, SWAT team arrives and arrests Johnny and Mark. Mobiles with video of fight confiscated as evidence. They are charged with assault, AVOs are taken out and both are suspended even though Johnny started it. Diversionary conferences and parent meetings conducted. **Video shown on 6 internet sites.**

**Scenario:** Jeffrey won't sit still in class, disrupts other students.

**1960** - Jeffrey is sent to the principal's office and given a good paddling. Returns to class, sits still and does not disrupt class again.

**2007** - Jeffrey is given huge doses of Ritalin. Counselling to death. Becomes a zombie. Tested for ADD. School gets extra funding because Jeffrey has a disability. Drops out of school.

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Until next time then... enjoy being a free spirit in a complicated world.

Wayne Mansfield Editor

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